Met Office

February 2015

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1981-2010.

UK overview

At the start of the month, the UK was under the influence of a cold northerly weather type, but from 5th to 12th high pressure became established across the UK bringing largely quiet, dry weather. A rapid breakdown around 13th brought a return to more unsettled conditions, but at the same time it turned somewhat milder. The second half of February saw a generally westerly type, with temperatures fluctuating and some heavy rain and strong winds, especially in Scotland where there were significant snowfalls across the mountains, but with some quieter days in between.

The UK mean temperature for February 2015 was 3.5 °C, which is 0.1 °C below the 1981-2010 long-term average. Relative to average, south-west England was coldest and Northern Scotland mildest. Rainfall was a little below average in many areas, especially north-east England and eastern Scotland, however parts of western Scotland and south-east England were wetter; the overall UK rainfall total was 91% of average. Sunshine was well above normal in most eastern areas, and the UK received 109% of average sunshine hours.

A maximum temperature of 15.7 °C was recorded at Oyne (Aberdeenshire) on the 18th. A minimum temperature of -10.9 °C was recorded at Bewcastle (Cumbria) on the 3rd. In the 24 hours ending at 0900 GMT on the 19th, 87.2 mm of rain fell at Altdearg House, near Sligachan (Isle of Skye). A wind gust of 77 mph was recorded at Berry Head (Devon) on the 13th. A snow depth of 21 cm was recorded at Aviemore (Inverness-shire) on the 1st.

Weather impacts

Snow and ice caused some limited disruption during the cold spell of weather from 1st to 6th February, and fog affected parts of south-east England on the 10th.

After a spell of settled weather, from 20th onwards there were some impacts from ice and snow across northern areas, while strong winds affected western Scotland and the north coast of Northern Ireland from the 23rd to the 24th, with the risk of coastal flooding exacerbated by high spring tides. Strong winds again affected Northern Ireland and southern Scotland on the 28th.

England diary of highlights

The month began with cold air covering the country, bringing wintry showers especially in eastern counties. High pressure then built, bringing dry, settled weather until mid-month, but after the 13th it was milder with rain and showers but also brief incursions of colder air.

The mean temperature for the month was 0.2 °C below the 1981-2010 average, with the south-west furthest below average. Rainfall overall was 87% of average; it was driest across the north-east, with less than a third of normal in a few places, but wetter than average across parts of Norfolk, Kent and Sussex. Sunshine amounts were well above average in the north-east, with 112% of average sunshine overall.

1st to 5th:

The 1st was a bright but cold day, seeing scattered snow showers in eastern areas, with Buxton (Derbyshire) recording a snow depth of 15 cm. There was a widespread frost on the 2nd with temperatures falling to -8 °C in Cumbria, but a bright day followed, with scattered snow showers in eastern areas. It began cold again on the 3rd, with -10.9 °C recorded at Bewcastle (Cumbria) but was another mainly fine day with only scattered snow showers for eastern coasts. The 4th started with a widespread frost, but a fine day followed with once again the east coast seeing scattered snow showers. The frost was restricted to northern areas on the 5th with rain and snow affecting some southern and eastern areas.

6th to 12th:

An area of high pressure was centred over the country from the 6th till the 12th, resulting in frosty nights and isolated fog in the north and west but sunshine by day, although it became more cloudy from the 10th onwards.

13th to 20th:

The weather changed on the 13th with rain spreading from the west during the day, but becoming patchy as it reached the east. The 14th was a day of sunshine and scattered showers but many areas remained dry. The 15th was mainly dry with sunny spells. A band of rain in central areas on the morning of the 16th spread slowly east during the day but not clearing the south-east till evening. A ridge of high pressure on the 17th gave a mainly dry day with sunny spells. There were scattered showers in the north-west on the 18th but it was generally dry and mild elsewhere, with a fresh south-west wind. The 19th started with rain covering many areas which moved slowly east during the afternoon. The 20th was mainly dry with sunny spells although an area of rain covered the far south-east for much of the day.

21st to 28th:

The 21st saw a widespread scattering of showers of rain, sleet and snow, with the best of any sunshine in the east. Rain spread from the west during the 22nd, reaching the east by late afternoon. The 23rd was a day of sunshine and showers; some of the showers were heavy with hail and thunder. The 24th saw further sunshine and showers, the latter heaviest and most frequent in the west and north. An area of overnight rain cleared the south-east in the morning of the 25th to leave a bright day with showers developing during the afternoon, and it was mild with Hurn (Dorset) reaching 14.0°C. A wet day for most areas on the 26th as rain spread from the west and only cleared the far south-east late in the day. After a chilly night, a ridge of high pressure made for a mainly dry day on the 27th with the sunshine lasting longest in the east. A dry and bright start for some on the 28th was replaced with widespread showers or longer spells of rain later.

Wales diary of highlights

The first half of the month saw mostly fine, quiet and cold weather, but the second half was milder and more unsettled with rain or showers.

The mean temperature for the month was 0.5 °C below the 1981-2010 average. It was a rather dry month towards the north, and the overall rainfall total was 79% of average. Southern parts were quite sunny, with 106% of long-term average sunshine hours for Wales overall.

1st to 12th:

The 1st was mainly dry with some sunshine, and just an isolated morning shower. A colder morning on the 2nd with a frost in most places, and showers all day particularly in the west with snow over higher ground. Another cold start on the 3rd with -7.9 °C recorded at Capel Curig (Gwynedd) and then a dry and sunny day, and cold again on the 4th but still sunny. After a cold start on the 5th it became milder through the day with some sunshine. The 6th was dry and sunny. Dry but cloudier on the 7th. The 8th had some early fog with sunshine later. Fog in the morning of the 9th lifted in the south-east but persisted in other areas or lifted into low cloud.

The 10th started with fog in some areas; otherwise it was dry but generally cloudy. Dry but dull all day on the 11th. Mainly dry on the 12th but sunshine was limited away from the south-east, with light rain in western coastal areas.

13th to 28th:

Rain through the morning on the 13th soon moved away, leaving some showers. The 14th was mainly dry, with some sunshine in the north-west, but isolated light showers in the south-east. Dry and sunny at first on the 15th but clouding over in the afternoon with rain into the west by late evening. The 16th was wet at first, but the rain moved away eastwards to leave sunshine and showers. Mainly dry on the 17th with some sunshine, before cloud increased in late afternoon. The 18th was mainly dry and cloudy. Morning rain on the 19th cleared east, leaving some showers for the afternoon. Mainly dry on the 20th with isolated light showers. Sunshine and showers on the 21st. The 22nd was dull with a band of rain moving in from the west from mid-morning, clearing to the east by late afternoon and then followed by prolonged showers, some wintry on the hills. Some sunshine and showers on the 23rd, and a longer spell of wet weather around the early evening. The 24th continued a similar theme, with the showers merging into longer periods of rain at times. Patchy rain in the south-west early on the 25th, then mainly dry but cloudy. The 26th had rain, at times heavy, through the morning which cleared by midday leaving a mainly dry and sunny afternoon. Mainly dry and sunny on the 27th with a few light showers later in the day. The 28th was mainly cloudy with some rain developing for late afternoon and early evening.

Scotland diary of highlights

The first half of February was cold but fairly quiet with high pressure influencing the weather from the 5th to the 11th. However, the latter half part of the month brought some stormy weather at times with strong winds, some heavy rain in western areas and significant snowfalls across the higher ground.

The mean temperature for the month was 0.2 °C above the 1981-2010 average. Rainfall overall was 96% of average, with amounts well below average in some eastern parts. Sunshine amounts were 107% of average overall; it was especially sunny in eastern parts.

1st to 4th:

The month began cold, with showers of sleet and snow in the north on the 1st but generally dry and bright in the south. The 2nd saw some wintry showers, mainly in the north and west. A frosty start on the 3rd with an overnight min of -10.8 °C at Dalwhinnie (Highland), leading into another cold day with showers of sleet and snow for most northern areas but also, occasionally, the south and east. Cold again on the 4th, dry in the south but with rain pushing into the north through the day.

5th to 11th:

As high pressure built, the 5th was mostly dry and fine apart from a few light showers in the north, and it felt less cold. Mainly dry again on the 6th with only a few light showers in the north. It was mainly dry again on the 7th and 8th with sunny intervals in the east and only a few light showers in the north. An east/west split again on the 9th with sunny intervals in the east but cloudier in the west with some light showers. It was mostly dry again on the 10th and 11th, apart from some rain in the north-west, with bright intervals in the north-east.

12th to 20th:

Rain at first in the north on the 12th with scattered showers developing later in the day mainly in the west. A period of rain in the south on the 13th but apart from a few scattered showers it was mainly dry further north. A mainly dry day in the west on the 14th but it was showery in the east at first. Dry in the east on the 15th, but rain edged into the west during the afternoon and spread across the rest of the country during the evening and night. This rain cleared into the North Sea early in the morning on the 16th but further showers and some

longer spells of rain spread from the west throughout the day. A breezy and showery day for most areas on the 17th but the showers were fewer in the east. The 18th was wet and windy in the north-west, with 46.2 mm of rain recorded at Achnagart (Ross and Cromarty), but it was mainly dry and mild in the east with 15.6 °C reached at Fyvie Castle (Aberdeenshire). Blustery showers or longer spells of rain on the 19th for most areas but mainly dry in the north-east. The 20th saw showers or longer spells of rain in the west but was mainly dry in the east.

21st to 28th:

It was breezy and cold on the 21st with showers of rain, sleet and snow in the north and west. A very wet day on the 22nd with strong to gale-force winds and rain, turning to sleet and snow on higher ground, sweeping across the country. Wet and windy again on the 23rd with rain, sleet and snow in the north and west spreading further east through the afternoon. Still very unsettled on the 24th with showers of rain, sleet or snow and strong to gale-force winds for most areas. Although slightly milder on the 25th, it was still windy with rain spreading across most of the country through the day. It was little better on the 26th with strong winds and numerous showers for most areas, with the exception of the north-east, giving sleet or snow on higher ground. Another breezy day on the 27th with scattered showers, mainly in the west. The 28th was wet and windy with strong to gale-force winds and heavy rain, sleet or snow spreading to most areas from the west: a peak gust of 70 mph was recorded at Edinburgh, Blackford Hill and 49.8 mm of rain was measured at Tyndrum (Perthshire).

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

The first half of the month was mostly cold and settled. However from the 13th onwards it was unsettled with frequent rain, strong winds and some wintry showers, interspersed with brief quieter frosty interludes and overnight frosts. However, it was also milder at times.

The mean temperature for the month was 0.4 °C below the 1981-2010 average. Rainfall amounts were mostly near normal, but slightly below towards the south-east, with 99% of the long-term average rainfall overall. It was slightly duller than average, with sunshine totalling 95% of average.

1st to 12th:

Overnight frosts gave way to bright weather with scattered showers of rain, sleet and snow on the 1st and the 2nd. After a severe frost overnight, with a minimum of -9.3 °C recorded at Katesbridge (County Down), the 3rd was mainly dry and bright. Another frosty start on the 4th led into a dry, sunny day, with a few scattered wintry showers by the evening which continued overnight and at first on the 5th. It was mainly dry on the 6th and 7th and milder overnight. Frost inland at first on the 8th but the day was mainly dry with good spells of sunshine, especially in the east. The 9th was mainly dry but cloudy with some fog and frost inland at first. The 10th to the 12th were cloudy and mainly dry, but there was an early frost on the 12th.

13th to 28th:

Rain, heavy at times, spread into all areas during the morning of the 13th, clearing away northwards in the afternoon. The 14th was mainly dry and cloudy. After a dry start on the 15th rain, heavy at times, spread to all areas by early afternoon and continued for the rest of the day. The 16th saw showers at times throughout. After a frosty start, the 17th saw showers in the north but was mainly dry elsewhere. Dry at first on the 18th, but rain arrived by the evening on strengthening south-westerly winds. There were showers in places on the 19th, some heavy but also with a good deal of sunshine. Colder in north-westerly winds on the 20th but sunny again with just scattered showers. After a frosty start, the 21st was a sunny day, with any showers mainly in the north. The 22nd saw a dull wet morning followed by further rain and showers, some wintry, and south-westerly winds reached strong to gale-force. Gale-force winds continued on the 23rd with further rain or showers, heavy and wintry at times throughout, and a peak gust of 57 mph recorded at Ballypatrick Forest (County Antrim). There were frequent wintry showers on the 24th and a strong north-westerly wind. Though dry by the morning of the 25th, another band of rain passed through quickly in late morning to leave a mainly

dry afternoon, and milder than of late. Rain overnight, heavy in places, cleared by the morning of the 26th, after which scattered showers continued to feed in on the strong winds but with plenty of sunshine. A mainly dry, bright day on the 27th. After a dry start on the 28th, there were spells of rain from late morning, heavy at times in the afternoon, giving way to scattered showers by evening.

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